

# Wisconsin Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Mathematics

*Every Child a Graduate, College and Career Ready*

Wisconsin is committed to providing a high-quality education for all students. For the past 20 years, our Wisconsin standards only provided consistent expectations for what students should know and be able to do at grades 4, 8, and 12. As we looked across districts in our state and across the nation, we found that the patchwork of expectations—some higher and some lower—generally did not embody the knowledge and skills that students needed to advance to the next stages of their lives.

Nationally, [College remediation rates](#) are staggering. Forty-two percent of community-college freshmen and 20 percent of freshmen in four-year institutions must enroll in remedial courses in basic skills such as reading, writing, and math. Further, U.S. employers are increasingly concerned about their ability to find the workers they need – even in the face of high unemployment rates. A 2007 summit with Wisconsin business leaders confirmed what we already knew: our standards were no longer fit for the learning demands our students would face in today's world.

## State Leaders Come Together Around a Solution

In 2007, Wisconsin joined state education leaders from across the nation to discuss the idea of working together to develop a set of rigorous academic expectations for English/language arts and mathematics to ensure that all students graduate high school prepared for life and work. In 2009, governors and state superintendents of education from [48 states](#), including Wisconsin, took the historic step of engaging in a bipartisan collaboration toward this goal. These states worked with teachers, parents, content experts and others to develop and release the [Common Core State Standards](#) (Standards).

In Wisconsin, we had a blueprint for college and career readiness developed by leadership teams of educators, business leaders, higher education faculty and stakeholders, and we knew what Wisconsin wanted and needed to see in any set of standards adopted. We used these teams to examine the CCSS drafts against our own blueprint. Wisconsin adopted the Standards in June of 2010 because they aligned with Wisconsin's goal of all students' college and career ready. They were higher, clearer, and more specific at each grade level, providing students, parents, educators, and stakeholders with exactly what students should know and be able to do to be ready for college and work. They do this while preserving the local control for districts, schools and educators to determine the curriculum, resources, and approaches important to each Wisconsin community.

### **Broad & Strong Support**

#### **More than 2/3 of surveyed:**

**Teachers** are confident Common Core State Standards will help improve student preparation for college/work  
- MetLife Survey of the American Teacher

**The public** believe the Common Core State Standards will make education more consistent  
- Education Next/PEPG

## The Standards Provide a Roadmap for College and Career Readiness

- The Standards establish **consistent** learning goals for all students—they do not define the curriculum that educators will teach in the classroom.
- The Standards are a **clear roadmap** of academic expectations that allow students, parents, and teachers to work together toward shared goals.
- The Standards are **relevant to the real world** and focus on the knowledge and skills students will need to succeed in life after high school, in both post-secondary education and a globally competitive workforce.

## States are Leading Standards Implementation for Student Success

Wisconsin began implementing the CCSS in 2010. Administrators, schools boards, teacher teams and stakeholders were trained throughout our state during 2010-11. Deeper trainings in specific subject areas were held across the state in 2011-12. Local school districts have been working for three full years to prepare for and enact the changes needed to meet the new higher Wisconsin standards for ELA and math. In the three years we have been implementing the CCSS, we have received not one phone call, email, or correspondence from a district that has not adopted the CCSS (because every local school district in Wisconsin has the right to adopt Wisconsin's standards or something else). Instead, we hear excitement, hope and promise that these standards will truly prepare students for the world ahead.

In Wisconsin, we are moving forward on a number of education reform efforts based on the CCSS. These include a new assessment, the SMARTER/Balanced Assessment, which will be online and more rigorous, provide adaptable questions depending on how the student is answering, and quicker more meaningful results to educators, students, and parents. This assessment is currently being piloted in a number of schools throughout Wisconsin, and Wisconsin is a lead state in developing this test. The use of the assessments is not mandated by any federal law or regulation, but will promote efficiencies in the use of federal and state funds. The results from these CCSS-aligned assessments also form the foundation for our new statewide school report card system, our teacher effectiveness system, and our work with teacher education programs. Significant education reform is happening in Wisconsin, and these reforms benefit kids.

### **Standards Focus on Student Success in College and Career**

The Common Core State Standards were written with the end goal in mind: student success in college and career. As a result, the Standards create a staircase where grade by grade, instruction is focused on the most important skills and concepts. This allows teachers to ensure all students master content and have a deep understanding of essential knowledge and skills.

#### **Key English Language Arts Features**

- ✓ Building knowledge through **literature, content-rich nonfiction, and informational texts**
- ✓ Reading and writing grounded in **evidence from the text**
- ✓ Regular practice with **complex text** and its **academic vocabulary**

#### **Key Mathematics Features**

- ✓ **Focus:** 2-3 topics focused on deeply in each grade
- ✓ **Coherence:** Concepts logically connected from one grade to the next and linked to other major topics within the grade
- ✓ **Rigor:** Fluency with arithmetic, application of knowledge to real world situations, and deep understanding of mathematical concepts

### **Broad and Strong Support for the Common Core**

- **Educators**
  - [“There are no miracles, but there are teachers: An educator’s view on the Common Core,”](#) Hechinger Report, by Massachusetts teacher Darren Burris
  - [“Common Core State Standards: Get It Right,”](#) Huffington Post, by National Education Association President Dennis Van Roekel
- **Policymakers**
  - [“The Case for Common Educational Standards,”](#) Wall Street Journal, by Jeb Bush and Joel Klein
  - [“The Mike Huckabee Show”](#) Conversation between former Governor Mike Huckabee and former Governor and now president of Business Roundtable John Engler
- **Business leaders**
  - [Open Letter from over 70 Top Business Leaders in Support of Common Core](#)
  - [United States Chamber of Commerce statement of support for Common Core](#)
- **Thought leaders**
  - [“Common Core Standards Sweeping Wisconsin Schools,”](#) Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, by Alan Borsuk
  - [“The Truth about Common Core,”](#) National Review, by Kathleen Porter-Magee, Fordham Institute, and Sol Stern, Manhattan Institute
  - [Common Misperceptions about Common Core](#) - Foundation for Excellence in Education (Jeb Bush)

### **Additional Resources**

- [Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction Common Core Webpage](#)
- [Wisconsin Common Core Myths and Facts](#)
- [Official Common Core State Standards Website](#)
- [Videos about the Common Core State Standards](#)